

THE

US ISSN 0010-1443

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 661

Hampden, Maine 04444

P. L. Mossman, M.D., Editor

Volume 37, No.1

April, 1997

Serial No. 104



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Registration No. TX5-120-604

An Error Sampler: Analysis of Nine Coin Errors Using a Quantitative Classification System

by

Charles W. Smith, Ph.D.; Orono, ME

(TN-171A)

I. INTRODUCTION

In a previous article in *The Colonial Newsletter* entitled "A Quantitative Classification System for Strike Errors," a measurement system for the numerical analysis of coin production errors commonly found for 18th century coppers was presented. The body of that article described how to make error measurements and illustrated several analyzed examples, one each for die-rotation, off-strike, and double strike and two for brockage errors.

In addition, Appendix C provided nine illustrations of coin errors intended as "try it out" exercises for those interested in testing the proposed measurement system, along with the promise of a follow-up article containing a discussion of each illustration. Appendix C, with some added reference lines, is repeated in this article for your convenience.

The discussions which follow will closely reflect the presentations for each error type described in the original article. It is hoped that the use of this quantitative classification system for error coins will eventually result in a database from which conclusions concerning production technologies and minting practices can be drawn.

II. ANALYSIS OF NINE COIN ERROR ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration A in Appendix C shows a die rotation error for a New Jersey copper. When a coin is first viewed with its obverse properly oriented and then turned over 180° about its horizontal (left-right) axis, the reverse should appear properly oriented, i.e. right-side up. Departure of the reverse design from its proper coin orientation is measured in degrees counterclockwise with respect to the vertical diameter of the coin, beginning at the 12 o'clock position. The reverse we see in illustration A is rotated 210° counterclockwise, thus its classification [A] is [210°]. But of course we don't actually know which die, obverse or reverse, is rotated! For this type of press loading error, we are actually documenting the relative orientation of the two dies. Having only one variable, [A], die rotation is the least complex of all production errors.

Illustration B shows an off-strike error for a Vermont copper. The diameter bisecting the struck area, shown as a dashed line, is oriented vertically. The displacement, D, of the struck area is a 20% shift along this diameter. The displacement is measured using a regular ruler or the special off-strike ruler provided in the original article. Using a ruler, two measurements are needed. The distance along the bisecting diameter from the edge of the blank area to the edge of the struck area (measurement 1) is divided by the diameter of the coin (measurement 2). Since off-strikes tend to elongate the coin in the direction of the struck area, the coin diameter is taken at right angles (transverse) to this direction. This ratio is expressed as a percent. The angular orientation of the struck area, A, is specified using the obverse design and is measured in degrees counterclockwise

Appendix C is on page 1668.

with respect to the diameter that bisects the struck area. It is often convenient to orient the obverse of a non-error example of the off-strike coin along the diameter bisecting the struck area and rotate it until its obverse design coincides with the off-strike design. A is measured using a protractor and expressed in degrees. Here A is 90° . The classification of illustration B [D,A] is therefore [20%, 90°].

Illustration C shows an off-strike error for a Massachusetts cent. Here the diameter bisecting the struck area is oriented horizontal and shown as a dashed line. The displacement is 50%. The orientation of the struck area with respect to this diameter is 180° . Thus, the classification of illustration C [D,A] is [50%, 180°].

Illustration C is used to demonstrate an additional general feature of the error classification system, namely, since measurements are made with respect to the diameter that bisects the struck area of interest, its initial orientation is inconsequential. I find it convenient to position the error coin so that this diameter is vertical, as was done in Illustration B. Illustration C, however, starts with this diameter horizontal. One obtains the same values for D and A for either starting orientation, since all measurements are "from" the diameter that bisects the struck area.

A full brockage of a Connecticut copper is shown in illustration D. The major clue, in this illustration, to the fact that this error is a brockage, is the mirror image lettering. In the case of a real coin, we have the additional characteristic that the mirror image is also incused...a spectacular consequence of its production. The classification of illustration D [D,A,T] is [0%, 0° , O]! Here the brockage type is O since the incused image is that of the obverse design.

Illustration E shows an off-strike reverse brockage of a Connecticut copper. The diameter bisecting the brockage area is indicated by the dashed line. The displacement along this diameter is 30% and the angular orientation is 45° . The classification [D,A,T] for this off-strike reverse brockage is therefore [30%, 45° , R].

A double-strike Connecticut copper is shown in illustration F. The first strike (the understrike) is fully centered and the second strike (the overstrike) is displaced from it to the left. By inspection, D1 and A1 are both zero. (The first strike is centered.) The diameter bisecting the second strike is horizontal and indicated by the dashed line. D2 along this diameter is 40% and the angular orientation of the second strike design, A2, with respect to this diameter is 270° . R, the angular orientation of the second strike area (as indicated by its bisecting diameter) with respect to the first strike area (as indicated by its bisecting diameter) is 90° . Note that R specifies the location of the second strike area with respect to the obverse design of the first strike and not the orientation of the design of the second strike. Thus the classification [D1,A1,D2,A2,R,T] for this obverse-on-obverse double strike is [0%, 0° ,40%, 270° , 90° ,S]. S indicates the type of double strike (obverse-on-obverse for same and obverse-on-reverse for flipped, F). Had the second strike been displaced in the 12 o'clock position, then $A2=0^\circ$ and $R=0^\circ$. Had the second strike been displaced in the 6 o'clock position, then $A2=180^\circ$ and $R=180^\circ$. Had the second strike been displaced in the 3 o'clock position, then $A2=90^\circ$ and $R=270^\circ$.

Illustration G shows a flip-over double strike. The diameter bisecting the first strike (the understrike) is placed vertical, $D1=10\%$ and $A1=90^\circ$. The diameter bisecting the second strike (the overstrike) is rotated 120° counterclockwise and thus $R=120^\circ$. Along this diameter $D2=60\%$ and $A2=0^\circ$. Thus, the classification [D1,A1,D2,A2,R,T] of illustration G is [10%, 90° ,60%, 0° , 120° ,F].

When a coin of one type is produced by striking it on another coin type, rather than a blank (for example, the Maris 56-n New Jersey coppers struck over Connecticut coppers) the resulting coin

is called an overstrike. Coins produced by this intentional mint practice are not considered error coins. However, an overstrike coin can be quantitatively described by the above system since it is, after all, a special type of double strike. Unless the overstrike coin also shows an error, its classification is particularly simple since $D1=0\%$, $A1=0^\circ$, $D2=0\%$, and $A2=0^\circ$. One only needs to determine R and the type of overstrike, S for same, obverse-on-obverse and F for flipped, obverse-on-reverse. Thus an overstrike coin has a classification [R,T].

The last two illustrations show blank cutting errors. The circular cutter mark that arcs across the surface of the Vermont obverse of illustration H is typical of the error that results from an unsuccessful cut-through of the copper sheet in the blanking process. The diameter that bisects this mark is oriented 20° from the vertical diameter of the obverse design and is displaced 60%. Thus the classification [T,D,A] of this blanking error is [M,60%,20°].

The Nova Eborac copper in the last illustration shows an incomplete blank or clip. The diameter bisecting the clipped area is oriented 200° counterclockwise with respect to the vertical diameter of the obverse design and displaced 80%. Thus, the classification [T,D,A] of this blanking error is [C,80%,200°].

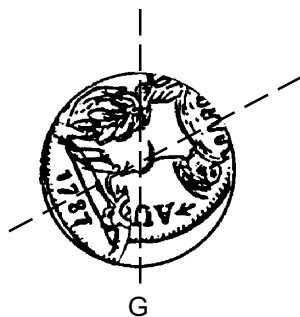
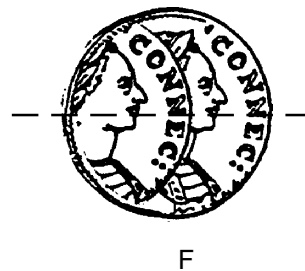
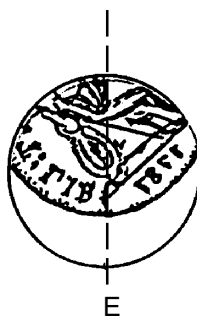
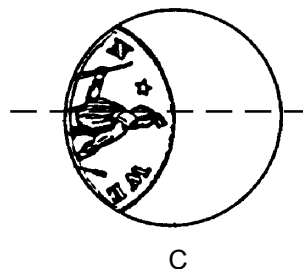
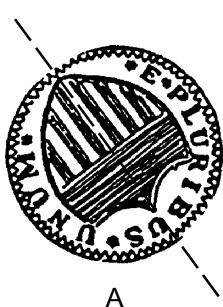
III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As stated in the conclusion of the original article, for many purposes, a qualitative description of a coin or a photograph, is more than adequate documentation, e.g., for insurance identification or its inclusion in an auction catalogue. However, for numismatic research into production technologies and mint practices, numerical ranges, statistical distributions and average values are fundamental to our understanding. Thus, for this purpose, a quantitative coin error classification system that assures a unique description and encompasses the major production errors has been suggested and demonstrated. Hopefully, it will eventually be helpful in developing a quantitative measure of our rich and diverse numismatic heritage. **CNL**

APPENDIX C

AN ERROR SAMPLER

These illustrations are reproduced from the initial article, "A Quantitative Classification System for Strike Errors." Reference diameters have been added to help clarify the error analysis discussion.



MORE ON MOREAU

by

Philip L. Mossman, M.D.; Hampden, ME**(RF-64A)**

I recently read the English text of Moreau de St. Méry's famous diary, *Voyage aux Etats-Unis de l'Amerique, 1793-1798*, written during his stay in America in the late eighteenth century. Moreau de St. Méry's commentaries are a valuable resource regarding many aspects of life in the early Federal United States, including several of numismatic interest. His story which concerned the New Jersey "half sou" has previously been reported by Gary Trudgen in *Penny-Wise*¹ and subsequently amplified by Michael Hodder in *CNL RF-64*.² Indeed, the eye-witness information recorded by this diarist which helps us understand early American currency is one of those "windows through time" so aptly defined by Trudgen in his article.

These adventures of Moreau de St. Méry's were translated and edited by my favorite Maine author, Kenneth Roberts, and his wife, Anna.³ Roberts has written a series of fine historical novels of this period, including *Oliver Wiswell*,⁴ which I referenced in my own book, *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation*,⁵ as an excellent resource to learn about life during the Revolution.

A few preliminary comments are required to introduce this eighteenth century diarist and the purpose of his American sojourn. Médéric-Louis-Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry was born on January 13, 1750 in Martinique, where his prominent family had lived for several generations. In the tradition of his father and grandfather, Moreau pursued a legal career in Paris. Following completion of his studies, he relocated to the French island of St. Domingue (Hispaniola, currently shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic), which at that time was the world's most productive sugar colony and France's most valuable possession.⁶ There he distinguished himself with the publication of a monumental six volume work which codified all the existing laws of the French West Indies, *Loix et constitutions des colonies françoises de l'Amérique sous le Vent*. It is significant that much of the information available today about the circulation of currency in French North America is based on those books and also his later work, *Description de l'Isle de St. Dominique* (1797).⁷ Moreau returned to Paris in 1784 where his brilliant legal career continued. He supported the Revolution, as did many of the middle class, championing the grievances of the commoners (Third Estate) against the excesses of the nobility.⁸ He rapidly assumed a leadership role; at the time of the battle of the Bastille, he was the virtual "King of Paris during [the] three days" July 13 to 15, 1789, and it was he who received the keys of the fallen fortress from its victors.⁹ He resigned his positions of authority within the permanent government because of his opposition to the lawlessness of the more radical elements. Perceived as hostile to the Revolution, Moreau fled for his life from Paris and went into hiding in Normandy. Discovered by his enemies, Moreau

¹ Vol. XXIII, pp. 250-51.

² p. 1152.

³ *Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey 1793-1798* (New York, 1947).

⁴ (New York, 1940).

⁵ (New York, 1993).

⁶ John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775* (Chapel Hill, 1978), pp. 285-88.

⁷ See McCusker, *passim*.

⁸ Charles Breunig, *The Age of Revolution and Reaction, 1789-1850*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1977) pp. 5-8.

⁹ See also Louis Adolphe Thiers, *The History of the French Revolution 1789-1800* (Philadelphia, 1894) Vol. I, pp. 55, 58.

escaped to Le Harve where he fortunately cleared port on the brig *Sophie* of Portland, bound for America, a mere eighteen hours before the police arrived with orders to return him and his family to Paris and certain death. He had cheated the guillotine.

Moreau de St. Méry's diary started at this point with a meticulous description of a perilous 119 day winter crossing to Norfolk, Virginia, arriving March 7, 1793. The situation in St. Dominique had so deteriorated during the French Revolution that he decided not to return home but instead remained in America where many of his countrymen from the French West Indies had also sought refuge.¹⁰ He gave elaborate accounts of Norfolk, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and many points in between, describing in detail, among other things, his overall impression of the communities, the characteristics and census of local white and slave populations, their customs, the typical architecture, the principle industries, churches, and other institutions, the roads, educational opportunities, and the price structure of many foods, goods and services, including board and room, transportation, and even prostitution. For his own livelihood, Moreau de St. Méry accepted a situation as a shipping agent in New York for a French firm. Later he operated a bookstore and printing establishment in Philadelphia which became a meeting place for the French *émigré* population.

This present paper will be devoted to a discussion and amplification of the monetary observations recorded by Moreau de St. Méry, whose analyses are valuable to numismatists since they provide opportunity for us to study and contrast the circulation of money under both the French and British North American regimes. Here we are introduced to a critique of our own national currency policies by a sophisticated foreign national.

French Colonial Exchange

Moreau de St. Méry's initial entry dealing with money concerned his New York employer's offer to pay him "at a rate of two hundred and forty piastres-gourdes or dollars a year."¹¹ He quoted this salary first in terms of his native money of St. Dominique, the *piastre gourde*¹², and then in American dollars. But actually, these two currencies were the same Spanish-American milled dollar of eight reales (*les reaux d'Espagne*), which was the silver standard for not only the French West Indies but for the rest of this hemisphere and much of the world. The fact that both French and British North America relied on the same standard silver coin, the Spanish-American eight reales, presents a splendid opportunity to discuss the other common features and major differences in the colonial monetary policies as practiced by these two European powers who were in competition for footholds in the New World.

The French colonists faced the same problem as their English neighbors, namely an inadequate supply of hard money. Thus the specie in the French colonies "was the same motley collection of coin used throughout the hemisphere. Although some French coin circulated in the New World, France's colonies were as dependent on Spanish silver and Portuguese gold as was everyone

¹⁰ "The white population of St. Domingue had embraced with enthusiasm the cause of the Revolution, which they thought must lead to their independence from the mother country." They considered it "their revolution" but the blacks and mulattos soon demanded not only independence from France but also their personal freedom and rights. On October 31, 1791, a black revolt swept the country where the white masters were murdered, their property burned, and thirty thousand perished in the ensuing massacre. Twenty-five thousand whites are estimated to have escaped the blood bath and fled to the United States. Thiers, Vol. III, p. 406, 406-7n.; Roberts, p. 265.

¹¹ Roberts, p. 41.

¹² *Piastre gourde*, literally fat piastre, is from the Spanish adjective, *gorda*, for fat (*Le Petit Larousse*, 1994). It is speculated that the "plaster" in the term, "shin plaster," comes from *piastre*, and the "shin" from the French, *chien*, for dog; hence "dog-money." The eight reales were also called *piastres fortes* (Roberts, pp. 139, 139n). (This derivation of "shin Plaster" cited by Roberts is speculative and requires other confirmation [personal communication, Eric P. Newman, December 9, 1996]).

else. The piece of eight was, again, the measure of all money."¹³ To lessen the impact of this ever-present dearth of hard coin, the French resorted to the same strategies as the English to promote substitutes for specie. They too instituted bookkeeping barter, developed commodity money, primarily tobacco, and were the first to issue paper money in this hemisphere (Canadian card money). In regard to hard coin, the challenge for all colonists, regardless of nationality, was the same; how to keep adequate money for commerce within the colony and prevent it from being siphoned off to regions where its value was greater. Both the French and English arrived at the same result but with different methods. The fact of life was that everywhere all coins were clipped and circulated at reduced weight. The problem arose of how to assign appropriate value to a light coin. Some English colonies based the exchange of the eight reales on the average weight of the coins found in their region. Others published a sliding scale establishing the market value as a function of the actual weight thereby compensating for any inadequacy in silver content.¹⁴ The French adopted a different tactic and "insisted that all coin be accepted by tale at its face value no matter what its weight or condition."¹⁵ Thus by officially sanctioning underweight Spanish-American eight reales, *piastres gourdes*, to circulate in the French West Indies by count (tale) rather than by weight, an artificially inflated value was placed on all clipped coins which hopefully discouraged their exportation from the region. The same net effect was achieved in Massachusetts but in a different manner where underweight Spanish coins were melted and reminted into Massachusetts silver whose denominations weighed considerably less than their English counterparts yet nominally they passed for shillings, sixpence, threepence, and twopence in New England money of account. Although the methodology varied, the sole motive of all these currency machinations was to keep silver at home in the colonies for local needs by manipulating its relative commercial value in comparison to the other regions, including the mother country.

For the French there existed a major difference in establishing the par of exchange for hard money between the colonial currency, *monnaie du pays*, and the metropolitan currency, *monnaie de France*. In the francophone world, this rate was dictated from a strong central government and was the same value for all colonies (133.33 to 100.00), although there was a lot of fluctuation especially in the early to mid-1700s. Under the English system, there was a single failed attempt to legislate currency values of silver under the Proclamation of 1704. The rate for the Spanish-American eight reales in British North America in terms of colonial moneys of account was determined independently by the colonial legislatures influenced by market forces; these values were quite stable and endured well into the Federal period (see Table I on the following page). For some colonies, the eight reales was rated at six shillings local money of account (New England and Virginia), the Middle colonies established seven and a half shillings as a basis, while New York adopted eight local shillings of account. Moreau de St. Méry had much to say about this diversity he encountered in the calculation of money from state to state. Indeed, it was confusing and, to say the least, inconvenient for intercolonial commerce.

The commercial rate of exchange for French bills of exchange was also officially determined in Paris, whereas within the English colonies, it fluctuated according to market forces. This is further indication that monetary policies governing the French colonies were under far tighter metropolitan control than their English neighbors whose currency was more responsive to the dictates of the market place.¹⁶ Far fewer records about the French colonial currencies exist today than for

¹³ McCusker, pp. 280-88; quote pp. 280-81. Moreau de St. Méry frequently quoted prices in French francs, but this denomination was not official until after 1794. For centuries the *franc* had been synonymous with the *livre* but the franc of twenty sous appeared during the Revolution. See Robert Chalmers, *History of Currency in the British Colonies* (London, 1893), p. 398n.

¹⁴ See Philip L. Mossman, *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation* (New York, 1993), p. 57.

¹⁵ McCusker, p.8.

¹⁶ This stricter regulation by the French was in part a reaction to "the financial debacle wreaked by John Law." McCusker, p. 282.

| A TABLE of the Weight and Value of Coins as they pass in the respective States of the Union, with their Sterling and Federal Value. | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------|----|----|-------|
| Names of Coins. | Standard Weight. | Sterling Money of Great Britain. | N. Hamp. Massachus. R. Island, Connecticut Virginia. | New York & North Carolina | N. Jersey, Pennsylv. Delaware & Maryland | S. Carolina & Georgia. | Feder. value | | | |
| | | | | | | | Kings. Dols. Pence. Mills. | | | |
| | dwts. gr. | L. s. d. | L. s. d. | L. s. d. | L. s. d. | L. s. d. | E. | D. | d. | c. m. |
| An English Guinea, , | 5 6 | 1 1 0 | 1 8 0 | 1 17 0 | 1 15 0 | 1 1 9 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6 7 |
| A French Guinea, , | 5 5 | 1 1 0 | 1 7 6 | 1 16 0 | 1 14 6 | 1 1 5 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 0 0 |
| A Johannes, , , | 18 0 | 3 12 0 | 4 16 0 | 6 8 0 | 6 0 0 | 4 0 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 0 |
| An Half Johannes, , | 9 0 | 1 16 0 | 2 8 0 | 3 4 0 | 3 0 0 | 2 0 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 0 |
| A Moidore, , , , | 6 18 | 1 7 0 | 1 16 0 | 2 8 0 | 2 5 0 | 1 8 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 0 |
| A Doubloon, , , , | 16 21 | 3 6 0 | 4 8 0 | 5 16 0 | 5 12 6 | 3 10 0 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 3 3 |
| A Spanish Pistole, , | 4 6 | 0 16 6 | 1 2 0 | 1 9 0 | 1 8 0 | 0 13 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 7 3 |
| A French Pistole, , , | 4 4 | 0 16 0 | 1 2 0 | 1 8 0 | 1 7 6 | 0 17 6 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 6 7 |
| A French Crown, , , | 19 0 | 0 5 0 | 0 6 8 | 0 8 9 | 0 8 4 | 0 5 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 0 |
| A Dollar of Spain, , | 17 6 | 0 4 6 | 0 6 0 | 0 8 0 | 0 7 6 | 0 4 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 0 |
| An English Shilling, , | 3 18 | 0 1 0 | 0 1 4 | 0 1 9 | 0 1 8 | 0 1 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 2 |
| A Pittarceen, , , | 3 11 | 0 0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 0 1 2 | 0 1 7 | 0 1 6 | 0 0 11 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 0 |
| All other gold Coins, of equal Fineness, are valued at 89 Cents per Pennyweight, and all other silver Coins of the same Fineness, at 111 Cents per Ounce. | | | | | | | | | | |

Table I: A table published by Samuel Sauer of Germantown, PA, in 1793 converting common specie coins of the period into the various state moneys of account and into Federal money. (Courtesy of Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society.)

the English and so the gaps in our knowledge are larger. But what is of great interest to us is that we can thank Moreau de St. Méry who recorded much of the surviving information relative to the French West Indies economy in his several books about the area.

Moreau de St. Méry's Comments about Virginia Money

Our French visitor landed in Norfolk whence he began his trip north eventually arriving in New York. It didn't take him long to react to the complexities of commerce conducted in the local moneys of account as related in this May 1794 entry.

Everything in Norfolk conforms to English measurements and small purchases are weighed on scales that are not models of accuracy. This stupid custom, combined with the difficulty in currencies whose values in relation to the dollar are not definite, leads to frequent disputes between shopkeepers and customers. The dollar is worth 6 shillings, which makes the pound worth 3 1/3 dollars, or 17 francs 13 sous, and the shilling 17 1/3 sous.¹⁷

Here again the dollar is the Spanish milled dollar, or the *piastre gourde* of St. Dominigue, which was the universal monetary standard of the period, and the real money in whose terms everything else was calculated. The various moneys of account, denominated in pounds, shillings and pence, had remained relatively stable in the colonies and now the states. According to the table published in 1793¹⁸ (Table I) the Spanish-American dollar was valued at six shillings, Virginia money of account, or one Federal dollar. In 1795 the French had changed to the decimal monetary system where the new franc was essentially equivalent to 1.03 old livre. The sou, or a twentieth part of the

¹⁷ Roberts, p. 62. This comes to 106 sous to the dollar, but the Virginia shilling should calculate at 17.67 sous, not 17.33 sous.

¹⁸ Samuel Sauer, Germantown, PA; courtesy of the Eric P. Newman Educational Society.

livre, and now the franc, had been replaced by the five centimes. At the old Virginia halfpence rate of 18 to the shilling, one copper just about equaled one sou of 12 deniers. Moreau de St. Méry quoted the Spanish milled dollar at five francs six sous.¹⁹

It is evident that the value of coppers under the both systems, the new Federal and the colonial moneys of account, was not identical. According to the new Federal standard adopted in 1792, 100 coppers at 208 grains were to pass for the Spanish milled dollar. But by figuring the other way at the rate of six Virginia shillings to the dollar and at the established exchange of 18 coppers to the shilling, 108 coppers of indeterminate weight would have been prescribed to pass to the dollar, or a discrepancy of eight coppers. We know very little about the currency of coppers in the south even before the devaluation in 1789, but now in 1794, it remains unclear just how many coppers would have passed to the Virginia shilling.²⁰ This confusion must have extended into the local marketplace since the diarist remarked that "the difficulty in currencies whose values in relation to the dollar are not definite, leads to frequent disputes between shopkeepers and customers." One could imagine how the inexactitude in the small change medium had the potential to transform an otherwise tranquil farmers' market into a donnybrook. Even with the advent of the Federal dollars and cents, the old moneys of account remained in vogue well into the following century. Is there any wonder that a visitor who traveled the eastern seaboard was bewildered at these strange currency practices? His comments confirmed but unfortunately did not define this apparent perplexity in exchange rates.

Money in New Jersey

The diarist took a packet ship from Norfolk to Baltimore, and then proceeded by schooner to Philadelphia. He continued the remaining 95 mile leg of his journey to New York by stagecoach, via Princeton, a community and college he described in great detail. His trip continued by way of Rahway, a town which inspired him to write, "Everything about the place made us regret leaving, and impressed us unforgettably."²¹ As he drew closer to New York he made these observations in Elizabethtown.

Since Elizabethtown has connections of every kind with New York, its inhabitants think of themselves as belonging more to the state of New York than to New Jersey, to which they actually belong, both topographically and politically. One of the first results of this idea is to lead them to reckon money as it is reckoned in New York - which is how money should be reckoned everywhere in the United States, since the divisions of New York's monetary system are the true division of the dollar. In effect New York assumes eight shillings to a gourde, of which each eighth is, consequently, equal to a shilling.²²

This entry confirms what is already known from other sources that eastern New Jersey was in the economic orbit of New York and followed her monetary practices with local money exchanged at 96d., or eight shillings to the dollar. The official rate adopted for the state of New Jersey, 90d., or 7½ shillings to the Spanish milled dollar, and observed in the western part of the state, corresponded with Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland who were influenced by Philadelphia

¹⁹ Many passages were interpolated after his return to France as indicated by certain dates. The author is not at all consistent since he quotes anywhere from 106 to 115.2 sous to the dollar (Roberts, pp. 83, 109, 118, 119), with 108 the most frequently mentioned. If an écu of 120 sous passed for \$1.11, then 108 sous would be the rate to the dollar.

²⁰ Very few coppers circulated in the south where they preferred to cut up fractional silver pistareens. Personal communication, Eric P. Newman, November 25, 1996.

²¹ Roberts, p. 111; also see Trudgen.

²² Roberts, p. 111-12.

(see Table I).²³ Since the old Continental Congress had its permanent seat in Philadelphia, the fractions of the Continental currency were denominated in ninetieths and the government conducted its business in those units. Moreau de St. Méry definitely preferred the convenience of the money of account divided into 96ths over to that of Philadelphia divided in 90ths, or Virginia calibrated in 72nds. He considered the New York method “the true division of the dollar” since it corresponded to the actual fractional divisions of the eight reales with corresponding silver coins (Table II). Since the pistareen was a debased two reales from mainland Spain, it and its fractional parts are not related to the Spanish milled dollar and its divisions.

| The Spanish Dollar and its Fractional Parts: Actual Silver Coins | New York Money of Account Divided into 96ths; Shillings to the Dollar | Federal Value |
|---|--|----------------------|
| 8 reales | 8 s. = \$ 1 | \$1.00 |
| | 7 s. = \$ 7/8 | 87½ ¢ |
| | 6 s. = \$ 3/4 | 75 ¢ |
| | 5 s. = \$ 5/8 | 62½ ¢ |
| 4 reales; four bits | 4 s. = \$ 1/2 | 50 ¢ |
| | 3 s. = \$ 3/8 | 37½ ¢ |
| 2 reales; two bits | 2 s. = \$ 1/4 | 25 ¢ |
| pistareen | \$ 1/5 | 20 ¢ |
| 1 real; one bit | 1 s. = \$ 1/8 | 12½ ¢ |
| ½ pistareen | \$ 1/10 | 10 ¢ |
| ½ real; picayune, medio, half bit | 6 d. = \$ 1/16 | 6¼ ¢ |
| ¼ pistareen | \$ 1/20 | 5 ¢ |

Table II: The correspondence of the fractional silver Spanish coins to the New York money of account denominated in 96ths demonstrating the ease of calculation and conversion.

As he traveled up the coast, Moreau de St. Méry quoted many prices of commodities and services in fractions of a dollar in both ninetieths, where the dollar was valued at 7½ shillings money of account as in the Middle Colonies (Table I) and in ninety-sixths, as in New York and, by custom, in eastern New Jersey. To cross the Neshaming Creek outside Philadelphia, Moreau de St. Méry related that “they demand a toll which is a forty-fifth part of a dollar, a little more than two sous a person on foot, one eighth of a dollar or thirteen sous and a half for a cabriolet with one horse ...”

²⁴ In one statement he used two notations, one from each money of account. Then later when his

²³ From 1676 until 1702 New Jersey was officially divided, with the East following the monetary practices of New York, while the West followed Pennsylvania. Although the united colony officially adopted the Pennsylvania exchange rates in 1750, as a matter of practice, each region continued to adhere to its prior monetary habits.

²⁴ Roberts, p. 99.

party crossed the Passaic River in New Jersey, "A cabriolet, three men and two horses paid two ninths of a dollar, twenty-four sous," but further on at the Hackensack River, the fare was five sixteenths of a dollar. Here again we observe that the traveler quoted prices denominated in both systems of exchange.

While at the Hackensack ferry Moreau de St. Méry described

...a remarkable scene between a passenger and the woman who collected the fares, who was young, pretty and had an expression of angelic sweetness. Having been given in payment one of those half-sous coined by the State of Jersey, she refused it obstinately and became furious, declaring with the most expressive words that she didn't give a hoot for the Assembly of New Jersey, whose members were no better than she and couldn't make her take their money.²⁵

This anecdote had previously been reported in *Penny-Wise* by Gary Trudgen. To understand its implication, one recalls that on June 10, 1790, the *de facto* legal tender status for New Jersey coppers had been suspended by the General Assembly who instructed the state treasurer to accept no more coppers. Michael Hodder's research added another wrinkle to this story when he reported a subsequent resolution adopted by the New Jersey General Assembly on November 27, 1792, authorizing New Jersey coppers remaining in the state treasury to be paid at a rate 24 to the shilling. It is my suspicion that since most tolls were paid with small change, the toll taker already accumulated more coppers than she could possibly spend and with a portion of her profits tied up in unnegotiable assets, she was unwilling to accept any additional coppers without an argument. It is still unclear just how people made small purchases, since the smallest silver coin was the quarter pistareen at 4.8 d., New York, or \$1/20 (5¢), Federal, and small change paper money was only regional. One must speculate good coppers still filled the gap and were probably accepted at 24 to the New York shilling.

Another important facet of this acrimonious exchange on the banks of the Hackensack River witnessed by the diarist is that he referred to the unacceptable New Jersey copper as a "half-sou" which may offer a further hint as to the prevailing exchange rate in 1794. With 106 sous or 212 half-sous to the dollar of eight shillings, a rate can be inferred of at least 26½ coppers to the New York shilling, the currency which prevailed in that part of New Jersey.²⁶ For the official New Jersey rate at 7½ New Jersey shillings to the dollar, the rate authorized in the above mentioned resolution, the par of exchange would have been extrapolated at 28 1/3 coppers. Both these values are compatible with the published 1792 amount of 24. In addition to the excessive coppers thrust upon her at the toll gate, it could have been also the indeterminate value of coppers, be it 24, 26½, or 28 1/3 to the shilling, which embroiled the young woman and caused her to vent her spleen against the legislature.²⁷

His Sojourn in New York

From May until October 1794, Moreau de St. Méry remained in New York City where he was employed as a shipping agent, loading and unloading ships, manual work for which he was ill-suited "This sort of galley-slave labor gave me plenty of time to dwell on its distressing features;

²⁵ Roberts, p.117.

²⁶ Of interest, there is a Maris 40-b overstruck on a host 1780 French sou and a 17-b over a 1774 sou which was entirely consistent with the New York exchange rate at that time, although the sou was slightly heavier at an official weight of 188.8 grains.

²⁷ This anecdote is particularly humorous for me. In our part of Maine, where Canadian coins circulate freely, just try dropping Canadian change in a turnpike toll booth! The rejection here is flashing red lights!

and my morale as well as my body suffered from it."²⁸

Despite these hardships, Moreau de St. Méry was still motivated to observe the world around him and he recorded his impressions of Alexander Hamilton and analyzed the problems which confronted the country during the prior Confederation period leading up to the need for a new constitution. As numismatists we are keenly aware of the fiscal chaos during those years, particularly those factors which were responsible for the minting of the vast number of coppers which characterize the coinage of post-Revolutionary America. Here is Moreau de St. Méry's interpretation relative to those difficult postwar years when the survival of the new nation was in jeopardy and the union itself was at risk for dissolution.

When the independence of the Americans was recognized, each state regarded itself as independent and wished to proceed according to its own particular interest. Trouble promptly developed everywhere. Acts of violence even started a civil war,²⁹ whereupon several people had the idea of announcing publicly that business would be destroyed if each state persisted in obstructing and burdening it. It was then wisely suggested that each state should send a commissioner to decide on ways to obviate such a disaster, and New York was designated as the most central meeting place.³⁰ ... As a result they planned to authorize the organization of a central power capable of forcing each state to obey. This authority was obtained, whereupon they produced the federal Constitution, of which Hamilton is known to have been one of its greatest apostles.³¹

The author's preference for the New York money of account computed in 96ths was very evident in his writings during his residency in that city. He devoted seven pages or more to a list of the current prices for over one hundred commodities and services, and in all but three instances, these were quoted in the New York shilling; the first exception was in ninths of a dollar, which could only be made in Continental or Middle States money, while the price each for a bottle of country cider vinegar and a pound of meat was a tenth of a dollar, a sum conveniently payable with a half pistareen coin. In Philadelphia, his final destination, only a few prices were mentioned but all were in fractions of the *piastre gourde*, or Spanish milled dollar. He was not subtle in his disapproval of the less convenient 72nd and 90th notations of Virginia and the Middle Atlantic States.

Philadelphia

From October 1794 until his return to France in August 1798, Moreau de St. Méry resided in Philadelphia where he conducted business as a printer, stationer, and book seller on the corner of First and Walnut Streets. His frustration at the inconsistencies in the American currency has been related already. He had a single sarcastic comment about the Federal Mint recently opened in Philadelphia.

There is one of those (a mint) in Philadelphia, but it is not busy. There are still only a very few eagles worth ten gourdes, half eagles worth only five, and quarter eagles worth only two and a half. Thus the Mint, as one might say, is merely a curiosity.³²

I think it is safe to say that Moreau de St. Méry's cynicism about the Federal mint sprang from his frustration of having to deal with the potpourri of moneys of account he encountered during his American exile. This mosaic of financial systems was a remnant of a prior colonial period when

²⁸ Roberts, p. 127.

²⁹ Reference to Shays's Rebellion in Massachusetts


³⁰ Reference to the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

³¹ Roberts, pp. 136-37.

³² Roberts, pp. 358-59.

all the colonial economies operated independently of each other and the different exchange rates were a result of the relative strengths of regional market forces, a legacy which could not be immediately rectified by the infant Federal mint, whose operation, according to our visitor's assessment, had made little impact. In fact, the continued dependence on local moneys of account and foreign specie was such an ingrained problem, that it could not be redressed until 1857 when our own federal coinage was sufficiently adequate to satisfy domestic requirements.

Return Home

The author returned to Paris on October 14, 1798, his exile at an end. He continued in government with an administrative post in Northern Italy under Napoleon. His last years, prior to his death in 1819, were spent in continued study of French colonial history. We are indebted to him for his contributions to our knowledge in many areas. In addition to his historical and legal writings which contribute to our understanding of French colonial currency, his descriptions of life in early Federal America contained in this diary are a valuable resource for the social scientist; for us as students of numismatic history, his observations confirm many of our prior concepts about moneys of account and add a few new dimensions to our perceptions of the currency of the 1790s. 

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Eric P. Newman, Gary Trudgen and Michael Hodder for their critical review of this essay.

THE GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VIRGINIA COURTHOUSE TOKENS

by

Michael J. Hodder; Wolfeboro, NH**(TN-173)**

Not very much is known about the 1714 Gloucester tokens. Only two genuine specimens survive, both struck in what appears to be a high copper content type of brass, but to no obvious weight standard. That the tokens exist is about the only certain knowledge we have of them. Where they were made, by whom, and for what purpose, are all questions current knowledge cannot yet finally answer. Even what is on the token, its types and legends, were only established with some certainty less than two decades ago.

In 1875, Sylvester Crosby noted that two specimens were known (one later turned out to be a cast) but that neither offered complete legends, the wording of which he was forced to leave unsettled. Crosby described the Gloucester token as apparently a pattern for a silver shilling. When Dave Bowers described the Garrett coin, in October, 1980, he suggested that the token might have been a tobacco warehouse receipt, rather than a pattern for a privately made shilling. Bowers' opinion is more likely correct than Crosby's, but there is still no certain evidence for it. Had it been a tobacco storage receipt token, one might expect that more than just two specimens would have survived, since many would have been required if they were to serve their original purpose.

One side of the Gloucester token shows a two story building with two side chimneys, a front door in the long side of the house flanked by four narrow windows, two on each side, and a circular light (a window over a door) above. In the center of the roof, above the front door, is a single gable. With its single entrance, gabled roof, and side chimneys, the building looks more like a private dwelling than anything else. It does not have the appearance of a public building or a warehouse. The other side of the token shows only a large five pointed star, a pentacle, voided in its angles and center.

Prior to 1981, when the second genuine token was discovered, an exact reading of the legends was impossible. After the second piece was found, the evidence from both suggests that the legends should read GLOVCESTER.COVRTHOVSE.VIRGINIA on the side with the house and RIGHAVLT.DAWSON.ANNO.DOM.1714. on the side with the pentacle. Below the house is XII, which led Crosby to believe that the piece was a pattern shilling.

A certain Christopher Righault purchased land near the Gloucester Courthouse from the Virginia Land Office in 1654. He obtained a second grant in 1668. It is commonly supposed that his son was the Righault named on the token. An individual named Dawson is known to have been a Ware County land owner and figured in the Abingdon Church section of Gloucester County. The house pictured on the token is usually described as being a representation of the Gloucester County court house. The significance and intent of the pentacle type on the other side of the token is unclear.

Two genuine 1714 Gloucester tokens are known. The one with the longest known history was probably once owned by George W. Cram. By March, 1874, Boston collector Lorin G. Parmelee owned it, and he proudly showed it to the members of the Boston Numismatic Society on the 5th of that month. At the time, Parmelee told society members that he had just recently purchased this specimen. The token appeared 16 years later as lot 512 of Bangs & Co.'s sale of the Parmelee Collection, realizing \$26 in a sale that saw the Crosby plate New Yorke token realize \$9.50 and a Willow Tree Shilling sell for \$25.



The finer of the two known 1714 Gloucester Shillings.
Ex Garrett: 1318. Photo courtesy Don Groves Collection.
(Shown 2X actual size.)

The Parmelee sale specimen reappeared later as lot 833 in B. Max Mehl's May, 1922 sale of the Ten Eyck Collection, where it was bought by Waldo Newcomer of Baltimore. When Newcomer's collection was sold to Mehl in 1931, the Gloucester token ultimately passed to John Work Garrett's collection. The Garrett Collection was sold by Bowers & Ruddy during 1979-1980, and the Gloucester token ap-

peared in Part III of the firm's sale of the collection as lot 1318, realizing \$36,000. Don Kagin purchased the coin, and it later reappeared as lot 147 in Stack's December, 1983 sale of the John L. Roper, 2nd Collection. It was purchased by a noted colonial specialist, who still retains it.

The second known genuine specimen was discovered circa early 1981 in an accumulation of coins bought from an elderly resident of Gloucester, Virginia. The piece was published in the November 7, 1981 edition of *Numismatic News*, as well as elsewhere. It was consigned to Bowers & Ruddy's Gerry Nelson sale at the April 29-May 2 Central States Numismatic Society sale. Appearing as lot 1, it sold for \$3,250 to Anthony Terranova. It is now in the collection of a noted Long Island specialist.

Only one of the two specimens that Crosby knew was genuine (the one owned by George W. Cram at the time Crosby wrote his description of the Gloucester token). The other piece seems first to have appeared in Dr. Charles Clay's collection (ca. 1870), the source of several other false pieces, including Massachusetts silver coins. George F. Seavey purchased the coin and he exhibited it at the October 2nd, 1872 meeting of the Boston Numismatic Society. In 1873, Lorin Parmelee purchased the entire Seavey Collection, and with it, the Clay-Seavey Gloucester token. Parmelee showed this piece, as well as the Cram specimen he already owned, at the Boston Numismatic Society meeting of March 5, 1874.

Presumably, since the Cram specimen was finer than the Clay piece, Parmelee sold the latter to William Sumner Appleton, a fellow Bostonian. Appleton's collection was donated to the Massachusetts Historical Society. The Clay-Seavey-Parmelee-Appleton coin did not appear in either of the 1970 or 1971 Stack's sales of coins from the Massachusetts Historical Society Collection. Its first auction appearance was in the 1976 ANA Convention sale, where it was described in lot 89 as having reposed in the Massachusetts Historical Society's collection for many years. It was mistakenly catalogued as being the Cram specimen, which we now know it was not. The token was sold for \$35,000 to John Roper. Later, this piece proved to be a cast copy taken from the Cram-Parmelee specimen. Once this was discovered, Stack's immediately canceled the sale, refunded Mr. Roper's purchase price, and donated the cast to a major public research institution.

A third Gloucester token may be known, but if the 1714 tokens are enigmatic, the third one, dated 1715, only deepens the mystery surrounding the Gloucester tokens.

The third piece was discovered with a metal detector in the village of Gloucester, Virginia, some time in the fall of 1979. Mr. Anthony German of that town was covering an area where a friend had told him he had earlier found Indian relics. The site was within a short distance of the location of the old Gloucester County courthouse. After obtaining permission from the landowner, Mr. German found numerous Civil War era bullets, as well as New York State uniform buttons, flat buttons, and modern coins. Mr. German found the Gloucester token during one of his sweeps, took it home, cleaned off the dirt with water, and saw the 1715 date. He put the coin aside, feeling it was a good find because it was very old, and thought nothing further about it for some months. He did not recognize it as a Gloucester token at the time he found it.

Then, in 1981, the editors of Gloucester's biweekly newspaper, *Glo-Quips*, published the story of the discovery and impending sale of the 1714 token which was to appear in the then upcoming Gerry Nelson sale. Reading his copy of *Glo-Quips*, Mr. German remembered the token he had found the year previous and realized he might have discovered something important. Accordingly, in January, 1982, Mr. German wrote to Charles Hoskins, founder and first director of ANACS and in 1982 director of INSAB, a private coin authentication company, requesting his assistance in deciding whether the 1715 dated token could be genuine. Hoskins traveled to Gloucester early in 1982 and examined the coin at Mr. German's house. As Hoskins related the story, he walked into their kitchen, sat down at the table, and waited while Mrs. German retrieved the coin from a jar of other coin finds that was sitting on the kitchen window sill. Hoskins was unable to take the token away with him for laboratory analysis. Consequently, he could issue no certificate of authenticity. His personal opinion, based upon microscopic examination, was that the token was genuine, and he so stated to *Numismatic News* in April, 1982.

The 1715 dated token presents several unique characteristics which place it in sharp contrast with the 1714 tokens. The 1715 token is badly corroded and would grade About Good on granular surfaces. Only portions of the legend on one side can be made out, and only the last three numerals of the date show on the other side. The central types are almost entirely gone. There is no trace of the building type, and only two points of the star on the other side show. There is no sign of a denomination remaining.



The unique 1715 Gloucester Token.

Illustration reproduced from a color enlargement.

Photo courtesy the owner.

(Shown 2X actual size.)

If being dated 1715 were not mysterious enough, the newly discovered token also seems to have different wording and spelling in the legends. On one side, the letters N.DO VLT. can be made out. Presumably, these are all that remain of "AN.DOM.RIGHAVLT", since the legible letters N.DO VLT cannot make up any other words in the expected Gloucester token legend. However, if this reading is correct, it assumes that reading the legend on this token was meant to commence with RIGHAVLT, pause after DOM, and continue on the other side, where 715. and the tip of the star show.

Whether the rest of the legends that appear on the 1714 tokens ever showed on the 1715 dated one is unknown, since nothing else can be seen on the latter save six letters. Where the words in the rest of the 1714 token's legends would have fit on the 1715 token, and how they would have been spelled, is a matter of some concern. There appears to be insufficient spacing on the 1715 token to accommodate the entire wording of the 1714 token's legends. Where the name DAWSON, which appears on the 1714 tokens, would have been accommodated on the 1715 piece is problematical, for example. Either it was dropped all together, or it was moved to the other side of the token. The former suggestion is not impossible, it might imply a dissolved relationship or partnership. The latter suggestion appears illogical. If the 1715 token included all the words found on the 1714 ones, then one would have to assume that the 1715 token abbreviated or excluded words that earlier appeared on the 1714 tokens. If this is the case, we may never know exactly what was engraved on the 1715 token.

The remains of the date on the new token, 715, are placed slightly above and to the left of the point of the star, and closely correspond in terms of position with that seen on the 1714 dated tokens. However, where the RIGHAVLT part of the legend and the full anno Domini date show on the star side of the 1714 token, on the 1715 piece the RIGHAVLT name and AN.DO are on what would be the house side and the date numerals are on the star side. If the court house building ever appeared on the 1715 token as part of its types, then it would have been on the side opposite the legend that gave its name. This near reversal of types and legends is curious, to say the least.

The 1715 piece is considerably smaller and lighter than the 1714 pieces. The 1715 token weighs 25.3 grains. The Garrett and Nelson pieces weigh 61.1 and 43.4 grains, respectively. This may not necessarily be a further cause for alarm, since there is no obviously apparent weight standard discoverable in the two 1714 dated tokens. The 1715 token is 18.2 mm. in diameter across its broadest axis. The Garrett and Nelson tokens both measure 24 mm. The sharp difference in size is troubling on its face, but not necessarily fatal to the authenticity of the 1715 token, either. Similar size differentials are known in many other early American coin series.

Is the 1715 dated token genuine? Could it have been a Gloucester Sixpenny token, as some have called it? These questions may never be satisfactorily answered. The 1715 token is clearly not a slavish copy of a 1714 piece. Its reversed types, curiously phrased legends, and unique date only serve to call special attention to it. Its near total lack of central devices and legends make it a very unprepossessing piece. The circumstances surrounding its discovery do not suggest anything other than a real find. In the absence of whole coin neutron activation analysis of the 1715 and a 1714 token, no definitive statement about the authenticity of the former can be made. That the token exists, looks old, and presents problems atypical of those found on most forgeries suggest to the present writer that the 1715 token deserves more study than it has so far received.

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE
Another New Connecticut Copper Variety Discovered
Miller 33.50-Z.24
by Ken Mote and Jeff Rock

(TN-174)

Whoever said "lightning doesn't strike twice" was not a numismatist! A few years after finding a new Connecticut copper variety, 1787 Miller 33.49-Z.7, which was written up in *The Colonial Newsletter* (November, 1994, p. 1452) another new variety has been discovered by the same collector, Ken Mote, in the same part of the country!

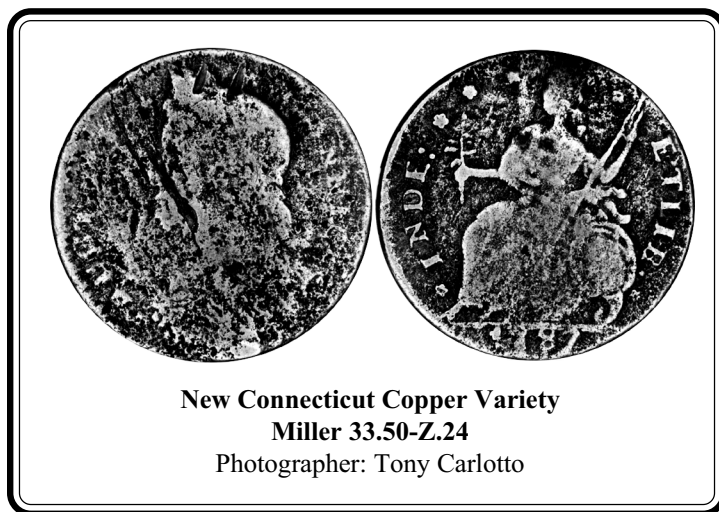
Like the previous discovery, this coin pairs a previously known reverse die with an obverse that, while extremely worn, is unlisted by Miller. The fact that the coin is so low grade explains why the variety remained unrecognized for so long. This [and the previous find] is a good reminder that colonial enthusiasts should invest some time in attributing all of their lower grade pieces because there are probably other new varieties out there in well-worn condition.

The present discovery uses Miller reverse Z.24 of 1787; all of the diagnostics are clear and sharp, so attribution here is certain. This is an extremely rare reverse die, previously known in just three combinations, with obverse dies 33.12, 33.18 and 33.25 which are rated a High R-7, R-8 and High R-6 respectively. The present obverse does not match any of the three known to have been paired with this reverse die, nor does it exactly match up with anything else in the series. Some key points to this obverse, which may not be visible on the accompanying photographs, are as follows:

- "A" in AUCTORI tilts slightly to the left.
- "C" in AUCTORI is high.
- "AUCTORI" is very close to the edge of the denticles.
- "E" in CONNEC is tilted to the right.
- The viewer's right side of the laurel wreath on the effigy's head is taller than normal, almost as high as the one on the left.
- "CONNEC" is shifted far to the right. A vertical line drawn from the inside bottom point of the first "C" would bypass the back of the head.
- The last "C" of CONNEC would be nearly bisected by a line drawn from the top of the ribbon end to it.

Although wear and surface quality could certainly account for some of the first five characteristics, the last two are clear enough to show that the obverse die is not 33.12, 33.18 or 33.25.

Like the 33.49 obverse discovered last year, this coin has enough detail left to show what it isn't, but not enough to conclusively say what it is. Under magnification, faint traces of what may be cinquefoils before and after AUCTORI can be seen, though this isn't absolutely certain. The punctuation of the legends and the ornamentation are not visible at all, though it is clear that the letters are small, which means that the die could be part of Miller obverse types 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 43, 44, 49 or 56. It matches no known die in any of these series. Again, we are faced with a problem of what exactly to call this obverse. The obvious choice here is to assign it to the 33 family of dies, based both on its many stylistic similarities and the fact that the Z.24 reverse is known paired only with dies from the 33 series.



We have tentatively attributed the variety as Miller 33.50-Z.24. Should another, better preserved, specimen be discovered which makes it clear that this obverse is not part of the Miller 33 family of dies, its designation can be changed at that time. Because CONNEC is shifted so far to the right, the possibility exists that the ornamentation before it may be more than just a single cinquefoil, like Obverses 49.1 and 49.2 which have a pair of cinquefoils in that location.

The technical specifications of the discovery coin are as follows: The grade is AG/VG, the obverse much more worn than the reverse, and with a lamination and some minor roughness as well. Weight is 107.7 grains and the diameter is 28.4 mm. The accompanying photos were harshly lit to bring up what little detail remains; the coin has slightly better eye appeal and is a natural brown color. The photos were graciously taken and provided by Tony Carlotto — thanks, Tony!

The extended family of the Z.24 reverse is rather tightly connected; as illustrated by the following diagram. The group appears to have been struck fairly close in time, with the Z.24 reverse quickly failing. Two obverse dies combined with this reverse, 33.18 and this new one, 33.50, are known only in that combination and both are extremely rare [3 known of the former, the latter currently unique], suggesting small and fast mintage runs. The 33.12 obverse was paired with four other reverse dies, W.3, Z.10, Z.16 and Z.21. Interestingly enough, the first two reverses listed in that group are also the only two others that obverse 33.25 are paired with.

The die states of this reverse are as follows:

DIE STATE I: Perfect die. Unknown, though may exist with Obverse 33.25.

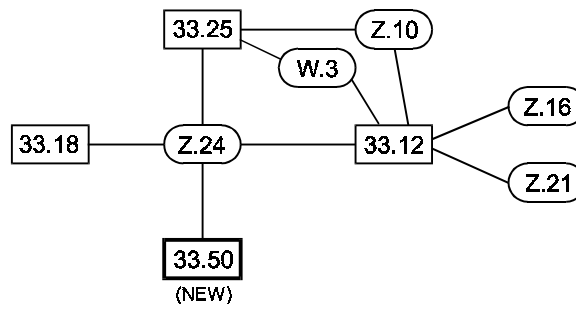
DIE STATE II: Light vertical break from the first “7” in the date extending up into Liberty’s dress. The Miller 33.25-Z.24 plated in the 1975 EAC sale as Lot 247 is a good example of this die state.

DIE STATE III: The vertical break is now bisecting the die, extending through Liberty’s figure out past her right shoulder and up to the rim next to the fourth cinquefoil. This die state is illustrated by the Miller 33.18-Z.24 found as Lot 246 in the 1975 EAC sale and, judging from the lot description, the Miller 33.25-Z.24 illustrated as Lot 2565 of the Taylor sale [though the photo does not clearly show the break].

DIE STATE IV: Shattered die, with die breaks all over the place. The most dramatic being a vertical one through Liberty's waist and an arcing one from her foot across the tops of INDE, nearly touching the fourth cinquefoil where the previous vertical break has slightly enlarged. This dramatic die state is seen in the Miller 33.12-Z.24 offered as Lot 244 of the 1975 EAC sale as well as the pair of that variety offered as Lots 2527 and 2528 in the Taylor sale.

An intermediate state between III and IV is probable, though it remains unseen.

From the preceding it is clear that the die emission sequence is as follows: Miller 33.25-Z.24, then Miller 33.18-Z.24 and Miller 33.50-Z.24 at roughly the same time, followed by Miller 33.12-Z.24 in the reverse die's latest state. **CNL**



The Z.24 Reverse Die Extended Family

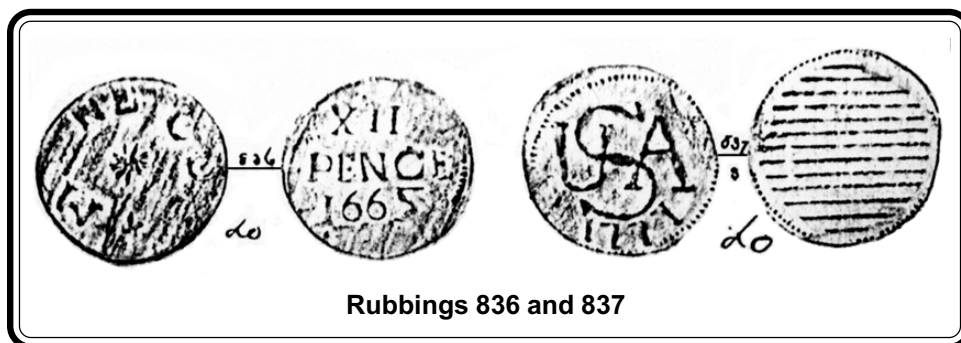
RESEARCH FORUM

THE 1777 BAR CENT

(RF-68A)

from John Kleeberg - ANS Curator of Modern Coins and Currency

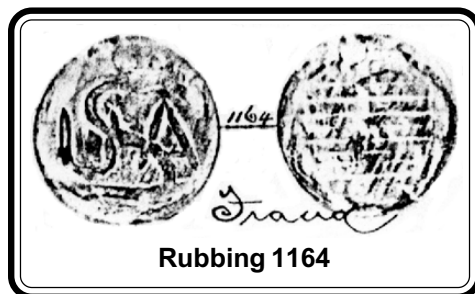
Dr. George Fuld asked if anyone could provide information on the silver 1777 bar cent copy that was illustrated in the May 1996 (p. 1635) issue of CNL. His observation was that "it looked like a C. Wyllys Betts production." John Kleeberg has responded with the following information on this forgery. GAT



Rubbings 836 and 837

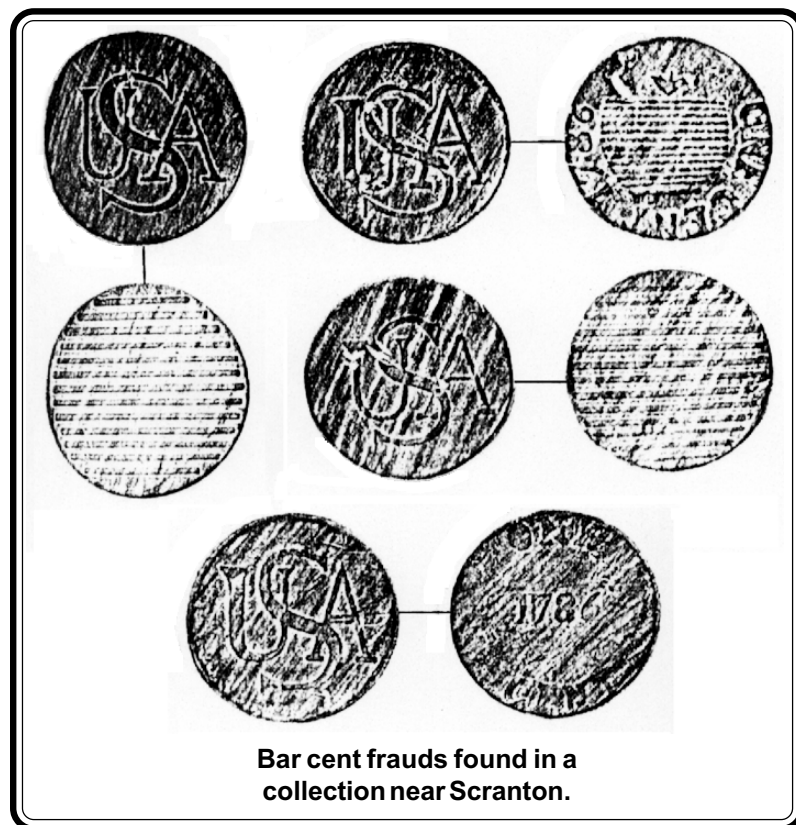
There is a rubbing of the 1777 bar cent in Lyman Haines Low's three volumes of *Rubbings and Impressions*, which are now in the library of the American Numismatic Society. There is a small "s" in ink below the pencil rubbing, indicating that Low saw a silver specimen. What is particularly interesting is that Low's consecutive serial numbers (836 and 837) indicate that he saw the 1777 bar cent at the same time as he saw the NE (New England) shilling of 1665. The NE shilling of 1665 (Eric Newman's fabrication NF, in the *Secret of the Good Samaritan Shilling*) was previously associated with phony bar cents by Ebenezer Mason, who, in the November 1881 issue of *Numisma* spoke of his acquisition of the 1665 shilling by saying, "I was led to think they were bogus, because I secured from the same source 2 copper bar cents having similar rude workmanship." Mason presumably did not see the specimen we have before us, because his were copper, not silver, but he might have seen a die duplicate struck in copper. If the 1777 bar cent was made by the same person who made the 1665 NE shilling fabrication, then it was not made by Charles Wyllys Betts, but by another nineteenth century forger, because Betts specifically denied manufacturing the 1665 NE shilling. Betts did make at least one bar cent fantasy, because a Betts die for the reverse is in the ANS collection, but it appears to be a different die from the 1777 bar cent reverse.

In summary: the 1777 bar cent in silver is a very old forgery; it existed by the 1880s; it may have been made by the same person who made the NE 1665 shilling, and if so, it was not made by Charles Wyllys Betts.



Rubbing 1164

Low has rubbings of other fantasy bar cents. Number 1164 is very crude, the letters lack serifs and his acquisition number indicates that Low saw it much later in time than the 1777 bar cent. Low also has rubbings of another bar cent fraud, where a USA obverse is paired with three reverse varieties: one is just stripes, while the other two have different arrangements of "ONE CENT 1786." These frauds came from a collection near Scranton, PA.



HESSIAN PAYMENTS

(RF-66B)

from John M. Kleeberg - ANS Curator of Modern Coins and Currency

The question was asked in RF-66 (February 1994, p. 1415) if anyone knew "...in what funds the Hessian mercenaries were paid?" In the next issue (June 1994, p. 1440), RF-66A provided primary source information in answer to this question, which was gleaned from the diary of a Hessian mercenary, Private Conrad Döhla. The following synopsis provides even further information on the subject. **GAT**

The following information is taken from an article by Niklot Klüßendorf, "Des Feldgepäck eines hessischen Offiziers aus dem amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg," about the liquidation of the estate of a decedent, Johann Ernst Lange, who died on 11 September 1776 during the voyage to New York. The first task the administrators did was to count up the money he had left, which in cash consisted of 21 guineas, 6 shillings, 23 carolins, 7 and a half old louis d'or, and 21 Bremen grotes. When his effects were auctioned in New York, the auction monies were paid with 23 half joes, 8 guineas, and another 7 shilling 11 pence in small change (alas, not specifically enumerated). Various other minor transactions in connection with the estate were paid in Spanish 8 reales (probably from Mexico or another colony) and 4 reales. It is possible that at least one transaction in connection with the estate was paid for using a paper New York 4 shilling note, although a 4 real coin may have been used instead.

Two interesting points emerge from the article. First, the 21 Bremen grotes remained in the estate, because the administrators could not get rid of them — they did not fit at all into the money in circulation in the American colonies. Second, the accounting was done in sterling terms — thus a guinea was reckoned at 23 shillings, and so forth.



EDITORIAL

Never in my wildest dreams, when I received my first *CNL* twenty years ago, did I ever imagine I would be addressing you someday as its new editor! I recall, as clearly as yesterday, my frustration on reading my initial copy, Serial No. 45 to be exact, when I couldn't decipher the sense of the acronym MOS, having lacked the first installment of the article on *multiple offstrikes*. I also remember my fascination with the story of the *Mermaid*. Immediately, I bought all the back issues which I read in the matter of a few weeks. It was obvious that I was hooked!

Although an active collector since the eighth grade, I was not bitten by "colonials" until 1962. My first three coins, two Connecticut and a New Jersey, cost \$1.00 each, and that trio was soon joined by a Massachusetts cent and later a Vermont RR-10. From that point on I was incurable! I must admit my discouragement for numismatics, when, in 1970, in Minneapolis, we were victimized by a random burglary. My colonials escaped the attention of the surprised thieves who fled with everything else upon the unexpected return of my family. Needless to say, my collection now lives in the bank; with this added security comes the major disadvantage that my numismatic activity is dictated by their business hours.

I was encouraged to join the *CNL* in 1976 by David Sonderman, whom many of you will fondly remember. My first personal contact with Jim Spilman was an inquiry about a Maris 56-n overstruck on a 1787 Connecticut 2-B. I had a slew of questions and the back issues of the *CNL* just served to stimulate further my curiosity. Very early in my "colonial" career I started to record and systematize my newly acquired knowledge about state coppers. By 1981 I had enough material to compile a brief monograph on colonial numismatics and pertinent economic history. I was brave enough to submit this essay to the *CNL*. Jim rejected this

draft but with the encouragement "to expand and enlarge the scope and details of the text." I followed this sage advice and in 1993 my perseverance was rewarded when the ANS published my book. To make a long story short, I owe so much of what I've accomplished as a student of colonial numismatics to Jim, and later as my career developed, to Sanborn Partridge, John McCusker, Ray Williamson, Eric Newman, and Mike Hodder, in chronological order. I feel that I have grown along with the *CNL*.

My major problem now is that I have a very difficult pair of shoes to fill. After all, I'm not a rocket scientist and Jim really is! I knew that he had put a lot of unselfish effort into the *CNL* but it was not until I actually tried on his shoes that I came to the realization of just how much work is involved in the editorship. I am more impressed than ever how great a debt of gratitude all students of colonial numismatics owe to Jim. He did a masterful job single-handedly for 33 years! I'll have it easy in comparison; Gary Trudgen is an expert in the technical production phase, and both he and Mike Hodder are most knowledgeable in numismatics and always available for consultation and guidance. The extraordinary resources of the ANS are immediately at my disposal, including their collection, library and an able curatorial staff always willing to assist.

To close, I should comment on a frequently asked question, why the name, *The Colonial Newsletter*, when we deal with coinages after 1776? The answer is elementary and I refer you to *Through the Looking Glass* for the obvious answer.

"*'When I use a word,'* Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, *'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.'*"
"*The question is,*" said Alice, *'whether you can make so many words mean so many different things.'*"

Yes, Alice, indeed we can and we do. Historically *The Colonial Newsletter* has been a journal devoted to publishing pertinent numismatic material dating from the dawn of civilization to

the establishment of the Federal Mint - or in other words, Alice, from *wampum* to *Washington*! But the serious answer is that there is only one true colonial coin, the 1773 Virginia halfpenny. Through loose usage, the term colonial has been generally accepted to mean that period of history prior to the implementation of the United States Constitution in 1789. In regard to the *CNL*, its timespan of interest has been extended to 1793, the first year of the official mint.

With that brief introduction, we're off and running. I'll be waiting to hear from you; it's fun to learn together!

The Editor



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Over the years, Jim, in his wisdom, established several formats for presenting the varied contributions he received for the *CNL*. These communications varied anywhere from specific questions, reports of new discoveries, areas of new research resulting in long articles, new theories, requests for guidance in pet projects, etc. Because of this potential smorgasbord of input, I think it is a good idea for me to review these several categories which Jim created to handle this hierarchy of data.

1. **RF** (Research Forum) - See *CNL*, page 66; these are questions submitted anonymously by patrons regarding their personal research problems; if desired, the submitter may opt to be identified, but regardless, all responses are signed. This anonymity is to guarantee privacy or to insulate ideas from a sometimes critical public.

2. **AE** (Ask the Editors) - See *CNL* page 1372; these are signed questions of a more general

interest submitted to the editors. The question and the first replies are printed in the same issue - if no one knows the answer, then the inquiry becomes an RF question.

3. **TN** (Technical Note) - See *CNL* page 146; a short original, signed contribution but not in response to an RF. This is the forum for the report of new discoveries. Frequently, comments from patrons concerning a previous TN will appear as continuing dialogue is generated about a timely topic.

4. **G** (Gleanings) - See *CNL* page 543; reprints of classic articles or other items of interest.

5. **CS** (Conjecture and Speculation) - See *CNL* page 1191; Conjecture: a conclusion deduced by surmise or guesswork and Speculation: a casual review which is often inconclusive. Webster tells it all in describing this forum where ideas are thrown out by patrons in anticipation of feedback from others; this material is neither secure enough to be a TN, nor enough of a question for RF or AE.

6. **Editor's Notebook and Editorials**. A place for the editor to sound off.

7. **Editor's Roundtable**. A place for the editor and two or more associates to do the same.

8. **CNL Databook**. A very long contribution.

9. **BP** (Between the Pages) - See *CNL* page 885 for the first one. This is material discovered hidden between the pages of a book, or other printed matter, such as a postcard, old clipping, etc., but not intrinsically associated with the book itself.

10. Last, but certainly not least, **Original Articles** presented by patrons which are generally longer, finished, and expository in an area of colonial numismatics.

I repeat the time-proven adage, "the only foolish question is the unasked one" in the hope that patrons will be encouraged to become involved in their newsletter where there are so many levels of participation available. No one should

feel inhibited from making inquiries or presenting new points of view. If we knew all the facts about colonial numismatics, the *CNL* could close up shop and go home. This, I guarantee, won't happen in the foreseeable future, so in the meanwhile, please send your questions, comments, articles, etc.

The Editor

Salutatory

With the retirement of "ye Editor" after some 33 years of compiling and publishing *The Colonial Newsletter* (CNL) it is appropriate to present some special observations regarding several extraordinary CNL Patrons.

Sometime during the early-1980s three new CNL Patrons appeared on the scene. In the beginning they were just names and addresses on the roster but as time passed it became obvious that these folk were more than our average "colonial" collector as they began to submit increasingly substantive questions and articles for publication in *CNL*. They became a source of expertise in those areas of early American numismatics in which ye Editor was woefully lacking; always cooperative and helpful and a great source of comfort in his *CNL* tasks. They quickly became the three points of a tripod of stability for ye Editor and for *CNL*.

In 1991 ye Editor and wife Lavinia made a trip through the northeastern United States specifically to visit these three Patrons who had been so very helpful over the years, so as to put faces and images to these impersonal names and addresses. It was a delightful trip made even more pleasant by the friendly reception accorded by each one and their families.

In 1993 these three Patrons agreed to become Associate Editors of *CNL* and the announcement appeared on the frontispiece of Issue No. 93 and on pages 1354-1356, which discussed

in some detail the circumstances and need for their assistance. It might be good for all of our Patrons to reread these several pages.

Our three Associate Editors - Phil Mossman, Gary Trudgen, and Mike Hodder - individually and collectively deserve great credit for the improvements in the content of *CNL* in recent years. Today they deserve even more credit for agreeing to continue their associations with the publication of *CNL* under the auspices of The American Numismatic Society. For both efforts - past and future - ye Editor offers a sincere and very personal Thank You to each of these splendid individuals and numismatic researchers.

James C. Spilman (ye Editor)

***** NOTICE *****

When the preliminary text of my book, *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation*, was first published in *CNL* #74, I advertised for patrons to contact me if they found any errors, omissions, disagreements etc. I'm striving to do the same thing again since I am aware of a few mistakes in captions, page references, and content which crept into the hard bound 1993 edition. These errata will be published in future issues of the *CNL* along with updated material, just as I did in 1988. If patrons have spotted other *faux pas*, or if I have stimulated questions or disagreements, I would appreciate hearing from you.

To start, Mike Hodder and I are updating my Appendix II which catalogues overstruck copers and their host coins. If you have additional candidates for that census which did not appear on my initial inventory, I would be most grateful if you would contact me so they may be included in this revision. I do need a reference for the coins, except for privately owned specimens which are treated anonymously and designated only as P (private collection).

Many thanks, The Editor